

PSYC 1001 – Notes

The History and Philosophical Foundations

- Psychology is the scientific study of brain, mental processes, and behaviour and the relation between them.
- Individual cases can be interesting but don't apply to everyone that's why general laws are studied instead
- Individual cases help understand general principles and initiate research
- We study history as not to make the mistakes of the past and as to try and understand the zeitgeist of the time
- Wilhelm Wundt considered the start of scientific psychology in 1879 however it was studied before e.g. Alhazen
- Zeitgeist = spirit of the times
- Trepanation = cut open skull to release demons in the mind in Incan society – already linked people having problems to the mind even though they didn't even know of the brain
- Edwin Smith papyrus were about head injuries in soldiers determining that:
 - left side of brain controlled right side of the person and vice versa
 - brain responsible for speech
 - touching brain caused seizures
 - brain has localised functions
- Egyptians believed heart was seat of the soul and not the brain so they threw it out when mummified
- Discovery of ventricles = 3 ventricles in the brain which all had certain functions, collection of info, cognition and memory
- Phrenology = bumps and ridges in brain are what have localised functions – many more functions in this theory
- Flourens tested this by removing certain parts of the brain
- Phineas Gage had iron rod through his brain, survived but with a total personality change
- Lobotomy is sticking something in the brain through eyelid, wiggling it and taking it out which was thought to help psychological issues
- Nature is thought that most knowledge is known at birth however nurture is notion that everything is learnt
- Noam Chomsky – everyone has the ability for language acquisition however there is a critical time span for it in which it can't be learned or comprehended after a certain time if no language has ever been learned
- Molyneux's question: if a blind person can tell difference between sphere and a cube by touch could they do it by sight?
- Tabula rasa – blank slate – we are born we have no knowledge or idea, everything is learnt through perception
- Plato thinks some knowledge is innate
- According to John Locke we are born without innate ideas. His view – all knowledge is delivered through our senses, experience is derived from perception.
- Materialism – there is only the body, all reality is of a physical nature, only the body exists – brain can be explained/reduced to biology and bio chemical activity – reductionism
- Mentalism (subjective idealism) – reality only exists in the mind. Without the mind reality might not even exist. Bishop Berkeley "objects can't exist without being perceived"
- Dualism = body and mind both exist and need to interact with each other

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